(b) if not, the present status thereof and;

(c) the number of programmes declared by Government so far for the benefit of those victims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (c) The State Government of Madhya Pradesh is implementing an Action Plan for the medical, economic, social and environmental rehabilitation of Bhopal gas victims which includes construction of hospitals, houses, training programmes etc. for them. According to the information sent by the State Government, all the Schemes have not been completed. Work pertaining to supply of equipment to hospitals and provision of drinking water is in progress.

Rate of gas supply to Reliance Ltd.

5039. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agreement with M/s. Reliance Ltd. for supply of gas for constructing gas cracker unit in Tengakhat of Assam;

(b) what are the reasons for agreeing to supply gas to Reliance Ltd. at the rate of Rs. 600.00 per 1000 standard cubic meter, when the same amount of gas is supplied to other industries at Rs. 1700.00 or more; and

(c) whether the Ministry would decide to supply gas to other gas based industries like APL, HFC units at Namrup and power industries of Assam, at the same rate as agreed upon with Reliance Ltd.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) Assam Industrial Development Corporation (AIDC) was issued a Letter of Intent (LOI) on 25.01.1991 for setting up a Gas Cracker Complex with a capacity of 3 lakh tpa of Ethylene. A joint venture company, Reliance Assam Petrochemicals Ltd. (RAPL) has been incorporated for the implementation of the project.

With view to making the Assam Gas Cracker Project viable and to offset the locational disadvantages, Government had agreed to supply gas at a concessional rate of Rs. 600/- per thousand standard cubic metre. RAPL and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) have initialled the agreed clauses of the Gas Supply Agreement on March 14, 2000. However, some issues are currently under negotiation between RAPL and OIL.

(c) The Government does not propose to supply gas at a concessional price of Rs. 600 per thousand cubic metre to other industries in Assam.

Refixation of prices of P.D.S. commodities

5040. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to refix/revise the prices of essential commodities under P.D.S. to a reasonable level, so as to give some relief to the people living below the poverty line, as well as in the drought- affected States; and

(b) whether Government have laid down any criteria for refixation as to who are the people covered under poverty line in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) As a result of the recent modification made in PDS, the BPL families will have a net saving in their family food budget since the monthly quota of wheat and rice has been doubled from 10 kg. to 20 kg. with effect from the 1st April, 2000. According to the estimates, the revision in the prices alongwith doubling the entitlement of BPL families will effectively transfer 41% more resources to the poor. Government feels that these measures advance the cause of poor.

(b) In the guidelines for implementation of TPDS the States/UTs have been requested as follows:

(i) The thrust should be to include only the really poor and vulnerable sections of the society such as landless agricultural labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans/craftsmen, such as porters, tappers, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc. in the rural areas and slum dwellers, persons earning their livelihood on daily basis in the informal sector like porters, rickshaw pullers, hand-cart pullers, fruit and flower sellers on the pavements, etc. in urban areas. The categories so listed are only by way of illustration and is not in no way an exhaustive list of those who could be brought within the ambit of BPL population.

(ii) The quinquennial BPL census made at the instance of the Ministry of Rural Development for implementation of IRDP can be a basis and the guidelines issued by that Ministry for BPL survey may be adopted. However, the overall number of BPL families identified should be limited to the estimates